STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS

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THE LOUISIANA OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH NICOTINE PATCH DISTRIBUTION PROJECT

Project Description

The Office of Public Health Chronic Disease Control Program has received a donation of 60,000 nicotine transdermal patches for state-wide distribution at no cost to the public. This number of patches is sufficient to supply 1428 residents with a full six-week nicotine patch therapy course. As support and encouragement to quit smoking are essential elements to the success of nicotine patch therapy, we have developed a new and innovative cessation support network for the program participants. Through this network, each participant will volunteer their time and talents to a community agency or organization that promotes a smoke-free way of life. Participants may volunteer in hospitals, schools, or agencies such as the American Cancer Society, and may engage in various activities such as spending time with cancer patients, speaking to youth about the hazards of smoking, and providing testimonials to other cessation support programs. In return for the time they volunteer, each participant will not only receive their weekly supply of patches, but also reinforcement not to smoke. Each week, the participant will record their hours volunteered with their supervisor and if sufficient, the supervisor will distribute the patches for the following week. This will continue for the duration of the six-week therapy course or until the participant has completely stopped smoking and/or requests to be taken off the program. Volunteers are encouraged, but not required, to continue their volunteer work after the patch program is over as it will both continue to discourage smoking and help the volunteer agency. The volunteer agency will also be asked to cooperate in evaluation of this program for six months following patch distribution.

This program will be advertised through television with a Public Service Announcement (PSA). All persons who respond to the PSA will receive a survey that must be completed and returned to the Chronic Disease Control Program to determine initial eligibility for the patch program. Because there are certain medical restrictions with the patch, we must review participant responses to the survey to determine if participants are initially eligible for this program. Dr. Carlos Ramirez, the Medical Director of the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program at Tulane University Medical Center in New Orleans, is our medical consultant and has approved this survey for applicant screening. If eligible at this stage, each participant will receive an invitation to a one-time orientation meeting in the health region in which they live. Here, applicants will have their blood pressure, height, and weight taken and meet with a physician to determine final eligibility. If still eligible, the physician will write a prescription for the six-week supply of patches. For all ineligible persons, Chronic Disease Control will mail information on alternative methods of smoking cessation more appropriate for the applicant.

In addition to determining final eligibility, the orientation will cover a full explanation of the program as well as discussion about nicotine patch therapy and behavior change for smoking cessation. The orientation will take approximately 3-4 hours and will discuss the following topics in detail:

- -The benefits of smoking cessation
- -Use, precautions, and possible side effects of the Patch
- -The Volunteer Component - the agencies, what is expected, rules and regulations, what to do if a problem occurs
- -Outside support - 1-800#'s, Chronic Disease Control mailings, other agencies in the area.

After explanation of the program, the meeting will be open for questions and answers. Participants will then be assigned to their respective volunteer agencies and contracts between the volunteer agency, patch participant, and the Chronic Disease Control Program will be signed. The first week of patches will then be distributed with the understanding that this is the participant's "Quit Day." Finally, time will be open for participant interaction and discussion.

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